

Agricultural Marketing Service, USDA

§ 979.35

be reimbursed for such expenses authorized by the committee and necessarily incurred by them in attending committee meetings and in the performance of their duties under this part: *Provided*, That the committee at its discretion may request the attendance of one or more alternates at any or all meetings notwithstanding the expected or actual presence of the respective members and may pay expenses as aforesaid.

§ 979.34 Powers.

The committee shall have the following powers:

- (a) To administer the provisions of this part in accordance with its terms;
- (b) To make rules and regulations to effectuate the terms and provisions of this part;
- (c) To receive, investigate, and report to the Secretary complaints of violation of the provisions of this part; and
- (d) To recommend to the Secretary amendments to this part.

§ 979.35 Duties.

The committee shall have, among others, the following duties:

- (a) As soon as practicable after the beginning of each term of office, to meet and organize, to select a chairman and such other officers as may be necessary, to select subcommittees, and to adopt such rules, regulations, and bylaws for the conduct of its business as it deems necessary, and to recommend nominees for the public member and alternate;
- (b) To act as intermediary between the Secretary and any grower or handler;
- (c) To furnish to the Secretary such available information as he may request;
- (d) To appoint such employees, agents, and representatives as it may deem necessary, to determine the compensation and define the duties of each such person, and to protect the handling of committee funds through fidelity bonds;
- (e) To investigate from time to time and to assemble data on the growing, harvesting, shipping, and marketing conditions with respect to melons;

(f) To recommend research projects to the Secretary in accordance with this part;

(g) To notify handlers of each meeting of the committee to consider recommendations for regulations and of all regulatory actions taken which might affect growers or handlers and to provide such notification to producers through appropriate news releases or such other means as may be available to the committee;

(h) To give the Secretary the same notice of meetings of the committee and its subcommittee as is given to its members;

(i) To prepare a marketing policy;

(j) To recommend marketing regulations to the Secretary;

(k) To recommend rules and procedures for, and to make determination in connection with appropriate safeguards;

(l) To keep minutes, books, and records which clearly reflect all of the acts and transactions of the committee and such minutes, books, and records shall be subject to examination at any time by the Secretary or his authorized agent or representative. Minutes of each committee meeting shall be reported promptly to the Secretary;

(m) Prior to or at the beginning of each fiscal period, to prepare a budget of anticipated expenses for such fiscal period, together with a report thereon;

(n) To prepare periodic statements of the financial operations of the committee and to make copies of each such statement available to producers and handlers for examination at the office of the committee;

(o) To prepare and forward to the Secretary, prior to the last day of each fiscal period, an annual report, and make a copy available to each handler and grower who requests it. This annual report shall contain at least:

(1) A complete review of the regulatory operations during the fiscal period;

(2) An appraisal of the effect of such regulatory operations upon the melon industry; and

(3) Any recommendations for changes in the program.

(p) To cause the books of the committee to be audited by a competent

accountant at least once each fiscal period and at such other times as the committee may deem necessary or as the Secretary may request. The report of such audit shall show the receipt and expenditure of funds collected pursuant to this part. Two copies of such report shall be furnished to the Secretary and a copy of each such report shall be made available at the principal office of the committee for inspection by growers and handlers; and

(q) To consult, cooperate, and exchange information with other marketing order committees and other individuals or agencies in connection with all proper activities and objectives under this part.

EXPENSES AND ASSESSMENTS

§ 979.40 Expenses.

The committee is authorized to incur such expenses as the Secretary finds are reasonable and likely to be incurred during each fiscal period by the committee for its maintenance and functioning, and for such purposes as the Secretary, pursuant to this subpart, determines to be appropriate. Each first handler's pro rata share of such expenses shall be proportionate to the ratio between the total quantity of melons handled by him as the first handler thereof during a fiscal period and the total quantity of melons so handled by all handlers as first handlers thereof during such fiscal period.

§ 979.41 Budget.

Prior to or at the beginning of each fiscal period and as may be necessary thereafter, the committee shall prepare an estimated budget of income and expenditures necessary for the administration of this part. The committee may recommend a rate of assessment calculated to provide adequate funds to defray its proposed expenditures. The committee shall present such budget to the Secretary with an accompanying report showing the basis for its calculations.

§ 979.42 Assessments.

(a) The funds to cover the committee's expenses shall be acquired by the levying of assessments upon handlers as provided for in this subpart. Each

handler who first handles melons shall pay assessments to the committee upon demand, which assessments shall be in payment of such handler's pro rata share of the committee's expenses;

(b) Assessments shall be levied during each fiscal period upon handlers at a rate per unit established by the Secretary. Such rates may be established upon the basis of the committee's recommendations and other available information;

(c) At any time during or after a given fiscal period the committee may recommend the approval of an amended budget and an increase in the rate of assessment in conformance with § 979.41. Upon the basis of such recommendations, or other available information, the Secretary may approve an amended budget and increase the assessment rate. Such increase shall be applicable to all melons which were handled by each first handler thereof during such fiscal period;

(d) The payment of assessments for the maintenance and functioning of the committee may be required irrespective of whether particular provisions of this part are suspended or become inoperative;

(e) To provide funds for the administration of the provisions of this part the committee may accept the payment of assessments in advance;

(f) If a handler does not pay his assessment within the time prescribed by the committee, the assessment may be increased by a late payment charge or an interest charge at rates prescribed by the committee with the approval of the Secretary.

§ 979.43 Accounting.

(a) All funds received by the committee pursuant to the provisions of this part shall be used solely for the purposes specified in this part. At the end of the fiscal period an annual financial audit shall be conducted by a competent accountant and two copies sent to the Secretary;

(b) The Secretary may at any time require the committee, its members and alternates, employees, agents, and all other persons to account for all receipts and disbursements, funds, property, or records for which they are responsible. Whenever any person ceases